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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Glion Declaration II, which resulted from the Glion Colloquium of 2000, an international meeting that focused on governance of universities. The Glion Colloquium is a private initiative that includes renowned scholars and higher education leaders from leading research intensive universities in western Europe and the United States. The Glion Colloquium examined stress factors related to how university communities balanced freedom and responsibility. Participants agreed that reduced government funding, the widespread primacy of research over teaching and advising, and new challenges presented by distance learning technologies and for-profit competitors combine to create obstacles to effective governance. To further complicate the mix, tools available to address these challenges vary from country to country. To adapt, the Glion Declaration II says higher education institutions should clarify the line between the responsibility of governing boards and the detailed management authority delegated to institutional administrators. Higher education leaders should also advocate for: an institutional embrace of public service trustee-selection processes that produce quality candidates; public accountability measures that gauge governing board performance; recognition of faculty contributions; and mutually reinforcing relationships between governing boards and chief executives. Participants and signatories are listed. (SM)

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Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

ED 446 567

Occasional Paper No. 46

The Glion Declaration II: The Governance of Universities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governance matters. In an increasingly competitive environment characterized by rapid technological change, intelligent and appropriate governance will allow higher education officials to make the best choices about what to embrace and what to resist.

That is why a group of higher education leaders from numerous countries and disciplines convened the Glion Colloquium. AGB and the American Council on Education jointly published the group's first declaration. That document and this new one can be profitably read in conjunction with AGB's "Statement on Institutional Governance" and *Renewing the Academic Presidency*, which contains the recommendations of AGB's national Commission on the Academic Presidency.

The Glion Colloquium examined the current strains on how the university community's balances between freedom and responsibility. Participants agreed that reduced government funding, the widespread primacy of research over teaching and advising, and new challenges presented by distance-learning technologies and for-profit competitors combine to create obstacles to effective governance. To further complicate the mix, the tools available to address these challenges vary from country to country.

To adapt, says the resulting "Glion Declaration II," higher education institutions should clarify the line between the responsibilities of governing boards and the detailed management authority delegated to institutional administrators. Higher education leaders also should advocate for an institutional embrace of public service, trustee-selection processes that produce quality candidates, public accountability measures that gauge governing board performance, recognition of faculty contributions, and mutually reinforcing relationships between governing boards and chief executives.

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Universities will be at risk if they do not adapt more rapidly to their changing environment and new challenges. This concern of the participants of the May 1998 Glion Colloquium in Glion, Switzerland, led to the conclusion that the governance of universities is becoming increasingly crucial, particularly for research-intensive universities. Therefore, the Glion Colloquium devoted its January 2000 meeting in Del Mar, Calif., to governance.

The Glion Colloquium is a private initiative. It includes well-known scholars and higher education leaders (some active, some recently retired) from leading research-intensive universities from Western Europe and the United States. They all share the view that the big changes that characterize our period represent serious challenges for universities.

This declaration, written at the request of the participants by Frank H. T. Rhodes, president emeritus of Cornell University, once again gives expression to the collective views of the colloquium. It is clear that this declaration is bent somewhat towards the American environment. However, the signatories are convinced that the thoughts expressed about the role of boards will hold great interest to readers in Europe because the solution to have boards is gaining support.

We thank the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bren Foundation, and Swissair for their generous support. We also are indebted to the Preuss Foundation and the University of California at San Diego for organizational support.

Werner Z. Hirsch
University of California at Los Angeles
June 30, 2000

Luc E. Weber
University of Geneva

***A list of the 26 signatories** to the Glion Declaration II appears on pages 8-9. Additional copies of this document are available from AGB; it also is available on the ACE Web site, www.acenet.edu.*

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The Glion Declaration II

Frank H.T. Rhodes
On Behalf of the Glion Colloquium

The Glion Declaration of 1998 called for the reaffirmation of the social compact between society and its universities to enable the institutions to make their fullest contribution to the changing needs of the global community. It also urged universities to rededicate themselves to effective teaching, creative scholarship, and research and the development of new and expanded partnerships in the public service. The signatories to the Glion Declaration, joined by a number of colleagues, met in Del Mar, Calif., from January 5-9, 2000, to consider how the governance of universities in Europe and the United States affects the well-being and performance of higher education institutions.

Distinctive Role of Research Universities. In Western Europe and the United States, a number of distinctive universities, sometimes referred to as major research universities, educate a substantial portion of those earning first professional degrees and the vast majority of those earning Ph.D.'s and advanced professional degrees. These institutions perform basic research and play a major role in technical development and public service. They do not stand alone in this. We recognize their heavy dependence on all other educational institutions—primary, secondary, and tertiary—and applaud their efforts to increase cooperation with, and provide added support for, these and other institutions.

Universities are communities of inquiry, discovery, and learning. They were created and supported by society with the conviction that the growth and diffusion of knowledge should not only enrich personal experience but also serve the public good and advance human well-being. The university learning community—now enlarged by the steady growth in outreach of its activities beyond the campus,

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by growing participation in traditional courses and programs, and by the worldwide explosion in all forms of distance learning—must assume an expanded role, undertake new tasks, and accept added responsibility in a society where a global economy, growing competition, and rapid technological change make our community increasingly dependent on knowledge as a basic economic capital. Even as we applaud the readiness of the university to embrace this larger role, we note that it imposes new strains on long-established values and long-standing practices, and it produces added tensions in traditional patterns of institutional governance and management. It is to these challenges that we now address ourselves.

Institutional Values: Freedom and Responsibility. The effectiveness of the university over a period of more than 900 years has depended on maintaining a judicious balance between freedom and responsibility. On the one hand, this balance has involved institutional autonomy and freedom of inquiry, expression, and teaching. On the other, it has relied on self-regulation, educational integrity, scholarly impartiality, and professional responsibility. This balance has served as the basis for the social compact in which society supports the university—both financially and in granting a remarkable degree of institutional autonomy and academic freedom—with the understanding that its resources and its freedom will be used responsibly to serve the public interest.

This mixture of freedom and responsibility has served both society and the university well, but we now see it under increasing strain, from internal changes and external forces alike. In the United States, for example, the desire to encourage student achievement has seen the traditional commitment to educational integrity weakened, in some institutions, by widespread grade inflation. Greater commitment to research has led, in some places, to inattention to undergraduate teaching and the subordination of advising and mentoring. A desire to recognize the interests of a wider public has sometimes led to partisanship within the classroom and the rise of "political correctness," while, perhaps from a sense of civic concern, scholarly impartiality has been weakened, in some cases, by advocacy thinly disguised as scholarship.

In several European countries, reduced funding has produced so great an increase in teaching loads as to diminish the effectiveness of some research programs. In identifying these issues, we mean neither to exaggerate their particular impact nor to suggest that they are ubiquitous or collectively represent a crisis in the affairs of the university. But they do exist, and unless they are addressed, they could seriously challenge the norms of impartial scholarship, true freedom of expression, and full and fair enquiry that universities have long promoted.

Other challenges to these norms and values come from the commendable efforts universities are making to extend their outreach and public service. In their attempts to cooperate with industry, universities wrestle with demands for restrictive corporate contracts and exclusive partnerships. In an attempt to increase sources of support for their traditional teaching responsibilities, some universities have experimented with the creation of separate for-profit companies, seeking to benefit from everything from distance learning to athletics to technology transfer. In their efforts to better serve the public, universities have undertaken the sponsorship and management of community enterprises such as schools, environmental initiatives, and health-care organizations, sometimes in alliances with public agencies or other groups.

All of these pose unfamiliar challenges to traditional campus norms and values, even as they seek to extend the effectiveness of the university's services and increase the usefulness of its activities. Paradoxically, each new initiative to increase the inclusiveness and extend the usefulness of the university poses challenges to familiar styles of governance and management and raises difficult questions of institutional responsibility.

We should be neither surprised nor dismayed at these internal and external stresses, for the history of universities is rich in comparable examples, from the development of the curriculum and the nature of oversight of student conduct to the growth of scholarly inquiry and applied research. But history also reveals that the cherished values of the university—integrity, excellence, community, open-

ness, respect, civility, freedom, responsibility, impartiality, tolerance (all exercised within an autonomous community of learning)—are not items of intellectual adornment or personal convenience but are means to an end. They are the essential requirements for the effective pursuit of knowledge.

These values are, however, neither an excuse for inaction nor an alternative to appropriate accountability. They are the lifeblood of the institution. Developed and refined over centuries, contested within and tested from without, they have proved the essential means not only for effective learning and discovery but also for its wise and humane application to human needs. These values must continue to be prized and preserved, and the principal responsibility for this rests with the board members, officers, and faculty of each university. *How* these values are reflected and embodied in the life and work of the university will, no doubt, vary from institution to institution. *That* they should be reflected is everybody's business.

This is no casual obligation but a responsibility of surpassing importance, for without respect for these values, there can be no university worth the name. In fact, in those countries where these values have been neglected or suppressed, universities have become places of political turmoil, pedestrian training, or dogmatic propaganda. We call on our colleagues to reaffirm and reassert these ancient values and to embrace them in every aspect of the life of their institutions.

Institutional Autonomy and Governance. Just as individual freedom has emerged as an essential means for the effective pursuit of knowledge, so also has institutional autonomy developed over centuries as the most effective means of harnessing knowledge to the public good. The means of achieving this autonomy differ from country to country and, in some cases, from institution to institution. In general, boards with substantial public representation govern public universities, both in the United States and, to a lesser degree, in Western Europe, with a membership achieved either by constitutional, governmental, or gubernatorial appointment or by election. In some cases, as is the case in American public universities, the board has a wide range of powers. It also appoints the president and grants tenure to faculty, for example, within a budget approved by the state legislature.

In many European countries, in contrast, the university rector (or president) and professors are formally appointed by the state after nomination by the university, according to a procedure specific to each institution. In other European countries, some of the board's responsibilities are delegated to participating councils composed of representatives of different stakeholders. In the quite different case of private universities, which are found primarily in the United States, the board typically is self-appointed and is the final governing body for all decisions, though in practice many responsibilities are delegated to others.

We are concerned here with the broad principles of shared governance, among the board and/or council, the president, and the campus stakeholders, especially the faculty. Because of the widespread existence of governing boards, and because many European universities that lack them are in the process of developing them, we concentrate on the work of boards in the comments that follow.

The function of a governing board is always twofold: It serves (1) to ensure the public responsibility and accountability of the university and (2) to defend the autonomy and integrity of the institution against erosion or attack, both from without and within.

Because the governance of higher education institutions has been entrusted to a designated group of public representatives responsible for the oversight of its affairs and the integrity of its activities, the board has ultimate authority over—and responsibility for—all the activities of the university, though in practice it delegates much of its authority and support. In the United States, for example, the board confers upon the president the annual right to award degrees while delegating to the faculty the responsibility of developing the curriculum. This pattern of delegation and the tradition of shared governance it represents is never absolute; it sometimes may be subject to review, and it may involve some tensions.

It is well, however, to minimize ambiguities and clarify the exact nature of delegation. Thus, in the United States, the responsibility for student admissions typically is delegated to the faculty and administration, but recent

actions by the regents of some major state university systems have limited that responsibility. Similarly, the responsibility for curriculum requirements is substantially delegated to the faculty, but recent actions by the trustees of another major state university have eroded that particular responsibility.

The exact composition, role, and responsibilities of governing boards differ from country to country. In the United Kingdom, an official guide to the conduct of board business has been published. We urge similar clarity elsewhere.

We are persuaded that effective governance by the board, when responsibly exercised, is just as vital to the performance and well-being of the university as are the responsibility of the faculty and the effectiveness of the administration. We believe that a number of recent trends threaten to weaken this governance, especially within the public universities in the United States, where political influence and special interests sometimes compete against responsible governance.

Reflecting the cherished values of the university—integrity, excellence, openness, civility—is everybody's business.

Effective Trusteeship: The Role of Governing Boards. Just as we call on faculty members to play a responsible role in all their university activities, we call on members of governing boards to exercise responsibly their fiduciary power in governance. At a minimum, this calls for the following:

- Reconsideration of the application of public-meetings law requirements and a prudent evaluation of their benefits against the "tyrannies of transparency."
- Improved selection of trustees within constitutional categories, perhaps by the appointment of an independent screening board to provide impartial assessment.
- Reconsideration of board size (often now eight members in many American public universities) in relation to function, with the possibility of increasing board size by adding additional independent members.
- Regular self-assessment of performance by the governing board.
- Development of a code of conduct.
- Informed governance, based on adequate knowledge of the complexities of the institution. That, in turn, requires an adequate information base that involves not only statistical profiles and budgetary allocations but also an understanding of the nature, quality, and relationships among campus programs and activities.
- Appropriate delegation of some authority to other responsible groups and bodies (the president, the faculty, and so forth) with the understanding that explicit clarification of this delegation is likely to improve effectiveness, that decisions made by others under such delegated authority sometimes may be subject to board review and reconsideration, and that the board may not delegate its ultimate authority for the mission, integrity, and financial viability of the institution.
- Recognition of the fact that board members, as citizen representatives, exercise not only institutional oversight but also the responsibility to defend and promote the institution and nurture its values. Their loyalty to the larger public interest can be served only by their commitment to the institution as a whole rather than to any constituency or special interest, whether internal or external. Board members should exhibit in their own conduct the high professional standards and impartiality they require from the faculty.
- Recognition and appreciation of the extraordinary variety, traditions, and complexities of institutions of higher education, with the knowledge that any general statement has exceptions and that no single pattern or style of governance can possibly be appropriate for all—nor can any statement of principles be prescriptive. Nevertheless, because the board is responsible for the well-being of all members of the institution and is the custodian of its resources, it has a particular responsibility for ensuring due process, orderly procedures, and appropriate levels of decision making and appeal. It can contribute to

institutional harmony by requiring the development and application of these procedures.

There is a world of difference between governance and management. Governance involves the responsibility for approving the mission and goals of the institution; the oversight of its resources; the approval of its policies and procedures; the appointment, review, and support of its president; and an informed understanding of its programs and activities. Management, in contrast, involves the responsibility for the effective operation of the institution and the achievement of its goals within the policies and procedures approved by the board; the effective use of its resources; the creative support and performance of teaching, research, and service; and maintenance of the highest standards of scholarly integrity and professional performance. The responsibility of the board is to govern but not to manage. "Noses in, fingers out" remains sound and tested advice to board members.

An effective governance system will define such matters as the right to information, consultation, consent, or approval.

In American universities, the most important responsibilities of the board are the selection, appointment, periodic review, and continuing support of the president. Candor, fairness, understanding, and trust are essential ingredients in this critical relationship. The president, when performing at a satisfactory level, is entitled to the sustained support, candid advice, and personal encouragement that the board is uniquely able to provide. That neither removes the need to question and challenge nor the obligation to understand the views of other interested parties. But the president has both a unique claim to and a substantial need for the understanding and support of the board.

Campus Governance: The Role and Responsibility of the Faculty. In urging greater attention to institutional values, we urge consideration of the following issues:

- We are particularly concerned that in introducing newly appointed scholars to the professorial ranks and in preparing graduate students for scholarly careers, little or no attention is being paid to the cultivation of scholarly values and professorial obligations. We urge faculties to address this shortcoming.
- A one-sided obligation exists in which the university is expected to provide tenure, compensation, professional support, technical services, facilities, equipment, and the protection of academic freedom to the professoriate, while the reciprocal obligations of the faculty member are nowhere specified. A professional code of conduct would redress this imbalance, and we urge the cooperative development and implementation of such a code by the administration and the faculty.
- The well-being of a university requires responsible participation in matters of faculty governance, and we urge the renewal of faculty interest in this important privilege. Such governance involves participation at all levels, including the department, the college or school, and the institution. In Europe, where staff and students are part of the internal governing body, we urge the same responsible, informed involvement.
- We urge the principle of subsidiarity in campus governance, in which decisions are made at the lowest appropriate level of responsibility. This would improve participation and understanding and encourage responsiveness and accountability. Subject to the framework of the campus code, an aggrieved individual generally should have the right to appeal a particular decision to a level one step above his or her immediate supervisor.
- Not all stakeholders have an equal claim to participate in campus governance. For example, delegated authority from the board is never permanent. Nor do those with little experience and knowledge—students, for example—have a claim to guide curriculum development equal to that of those with substantial experience and knowledge—the faculty, for example. But knowledge and experience generally are confined to particular areas of expertise. No faculty member and no board member, for example, can speak for the entire institution. Only the chair of the board and the president can do so.

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Systems of campus governance should reflect these various levels of responsibility, avoiding burdensome proliferation of committees in favor of a streamlined governance system that has clear guidelines concerning the respective authority of each of its administrative officers and participating member groups. An effective governance system will define such matters as the right to information, consultation, consent, or approval. Much of the present ineffectiveness of faculty governance and the cumbersome nature of decision making reflect the confusion surrounding the separate matters of the right of the faculty to be informed, their right to be consulted, and their right to approve.

- The elaborate structure of campus governance and the labyrinthine path of campus consultations and decision making will be subjected to intensified strain in the face of the increasing need for campus officials to make difficult and unpopular decisions, respond promptly to rapid changes, and satisfy the burgeoning demands of government oversight and regulation. We also are concerned that because these structures and the notion of academic freedom sometimes have been used as an excuse for a failure to look critically at the performance of the university and the painful question of whether it practices the lofty values it proclaims, the public will become less tolerant of the autonomy and shared governance our universities currently enjoy. If we wish external critics to respect the enormous importance of the research university and to recognize the need for latitude and freedom in the way it discharges its responsibilities to society, we must respond to these concerns, use our governance effectively to address our own shortcomings, and demonstrate that we are doing so.
- Effective governance requires shared goals and recognition of their achievement. Faculty members should be recognized and rewarded when they achieve professional success in their teaching or research or display conspicuous devotion and commitment to their institution and its goals. Designating some significant portion of the total annual faculty salary pool as bonus payments to faculty members whose performance has been outstanding could encourage this.

The Role of the President, Vice Chancellor, or Rector. The essential link between the governing board and the institution it represents is the president, vice chancellor, or rector. For convenience, we refer to this individual as the president. Without effective presidential leadership, no system of campus governance can be effective.

- It is the responsibility of the president not only to explain the role and concerns of the board to the campus community but also to interpret for the board the distinctive role and concerns of the faculty and other members of the campus community. The basis of this role is mutual respect and trust, without which no strong system of campus governance can develop.
- The president must lead. The president is far more than an intermediary between these groups. It is to the president that both the board and the campus look for leadership and direction. The president must supply that leadership, accepting the responsibilities and opportunities afforded by the office and delegated by the board. Presidential timidity and endless compromise are the enemies of effective campus governance.

Nowhere is the need for presidential leadership greater than in leading the process of developing a statement of institutional mission, in consultation with the faculty and other stakeholders and subject to approval by the board. The president has a unique role in creating a sense of confidence and commitment among members of the campus community and in nurturing and promoting the values on which the well-being of the institution depends.

- To ensure an appropriate role for each of the participants in the developing affairs of the university, the judgment of the president is essential in achieving an effective balance between executive decision and campus and board approval. Delegation, consultation, review, and approval should represent an orderly process that is based on a mutual understanding that pays due regard to the appropriate role and responsibilities of each of the several partners. This requires careful thought and planning of information flow, agenda preparation, consultation, and cooperation.
- The president, as the duly appointed senior officer of the university, should enjoy

the support and trust of the board. Proposals for action, carefully conceived, fully articulated, and appropriately reviewed—both on campus and by the board—should be expected to win approval and support. An effective system of governance requires a clear working agreement on various areas of responsibility and the need for timely review and closure. Trustees and members of campus governance groups never should regard their duties as mere formality or rubber-stamp actions.

Conclusion. Universities supply society with three vital commodities—shared experience, demonstrable knowledge, and humanely used skills. These remain the business of the university, at once both its means and its products. Our successors in the new millennium will look back on a planet and a people whose condition will largely reflect how responsibly, intelligently, and humanely we, the members of the universities, have cultivated them today and how wisely we have governed the remarkable institutions in which they are nurtured.

Attention to the issues we have identified will strengthen governance and thus improve the capacity of our universities to continue to play a beneficial role in society. ◆

PARTICIPANTS AND SIGNATORIES

The participants are grateful to Frank H.T. Rhodes for his sensitive and eloquent summary, the draft of which was circulated among the members of the steering committee, who then contributed editorial comments and suggestions. All participants agreed to be cosignatories of the declaration.

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The AGB Mission

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) is dedicated to strengthening the performance of boards of public and private higher education. It advances the practice of citizen trusteeship that has distinguished American higher education for more than 350 years. By serving as a continuing-education resource to trustees and boards and by contributing to effective working relationships between boards and chief executives, AGB seeks to strengthen the governance of higher education institutions.

AGB recognizes its leadership responsibilities to members and to a diverse system of higher education. The association strongly believes in citizen control of our colleges and universities, rather than direct governmental control, and works to ensure that higher education remains a strong and vital national asset.

AGB carries out its mission adhering to the following objectives:

- To educate individual trustees and boards on matters that affect their institutional oversight responsibilities.
- To promote wider understanding of and appreciation for citizen leadership and lay governance as the only effective ways to ensure the quality and independence of American higher education.
- To advance the philosophy that all elected or appointed trustees serve in the public trust and should consider themselves trustees of higher education as a whole.
- To strengthen the relationship between trustees and chief executives in the fulfillment of their distinct yet complementary responsibilities.
- To stimulate cooperation with public-policy makers, government agencies, and private organizations that have a stake in the effective governance and quality of colleges and universities.
- To identify and study emerging public-policy issues of concern to higher education by providing forums for their discussion and by encouraging appropriate member initiative.

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